

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 1, 4, 7, 19, 21, 22, 26 and 27, without prejudice to presenting them in a continuing application.

A detailed listing of all the claims that are, or were, in the application is presented below. Current amendments to the claims, including additions being shown by underlining and deletions being shown by strikethrough or double brackets, are expressed in the listing.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A three dimensional thermoplastic welding rod comprising:

a first layer formed from material comprising pigmented particles, the pigmented particles comprising a majority by volume of the first layer; and

a second layer formed from material comprising transparent or translucent particles, the second layer having an exposed surface opposite the first layer, the portion of the second layer adjacent the exposed surface comprising substantially all transparent or translucent particles,

particles of the second layer filling at least some of the voids between particles of the first layer, whereby the second layer penetrates into the first layer at the interface between the first and second layers.

2. (Original) The three dimensional welding rod of claim 1, wherein the second layer has a greater thickness than the first layer.

3. (Original) The three dimensional welding rod of claim 1, wherein the pigmented particles are applied and consolidated to generate a design or pattern effect.

4. (Currently Amended) The three dimensional welding rod of claim 1, wherein the pigmented particles comprise particles [[are]] selected from the group consisting of ~~solid colored particles, jaspe particles, pearlized particles~~ jaspes, clears, pearl chips, accents, mottled and combinations thereof.

5. (Original) The three dimensional welding rod of claim 1, wherein the first layer further comprises transparent particles.

6. (Original) The three dimensional welding rod of claim 1, wherein the pigmented particles are larger than the transparent or translucent particles.

7. (Currently Amended) The three dimensional welding rod of claim 1, wherein the pigmented particles of the first layer and the transparent or translucent particles of the second layer comprise a thermoplastic polymeric material.

8. (Original) The three dimensional welding rod of claim 1, wherein transparent particles are substantially colorless.

Claims 9 to 18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) A surface covering comprising:
at least two sheets joined together by a welded seam, wherein the seam comprises a first layer formed from material comprising pigmented particles, the pigmented particles comprising a majority by volume of the first layer; and a second layer formed from material comprising transparent or translucent particles, the second layer having an exposed surface opposite the first layer, the portion of the second layer adjacent the exposed surface comprising substantially all transparent or translucent particles, particles of the second layer filling at least some of the voids between particles of the first layer, whereby the second layer penetrates into the first layer at the interface between the first and second layers.

20. (Original) The surface covering of claim 19, wherein the thickness of the first layer of pigmented particles is equal to or less than the thickness of a pigmented layer of the sheets.

21. (Currently Amended) A three dimensional thermoplastic welding rod comprising:

a first layer formed from a first material comprising a plurality of first particles,
and

a second layer formed from a second material comprising a plurality of second
particles, the second layer having an exposed surface opposite the first layer, the
transparency of the second layer being at least 30% greater than the transparency of the
first layer; particles of the second layer filling at least some of the voids between particles
of the first layer, whereby the second layer penetrates into the first layer at the interface
between the first and second layers.

22. (Currently Amended) The three dimensional welding rod of claim 21,
wherein the average diameter of the particles forming the first layer are greater than the
average diameter of the particles forming the second layer, ~~some of the particles forming~~
~~the second layer interpenetrating the particles forming the first layer at the interface~~
~~between the first and second layers.~~

23. (Original) The welding rod of claim 21, wherein the second particles are
substantially colorless.

24. (Original) The welding rod of claim 21, wherein the second material further
comprises a minority by volume of opaque particles.

25. (Original) The welding rod of claim 21, wherein the first layer further comprises a minority by volume of the second particles and the second layer further comprises a minority by volume of the first particles.

26. (Currently Amended) A surface covering comprising:
at least two sheets joined together by a welded seam, wherein the seam comprises a first layer formed from a first material comprising a plurality of first particles, and a second layer formed from a second material comprising a plurality of second particles, the second layer having an exposed surface opposite the first layer, the transparency of the second layer being at least 30% greater than the transparency of the first layer, particles of the second layer filling at least some of the voids between particles of the first layer, whereby the second layer penetrates into the first layer at the interface between the first and second layers.

27. (Currently Amended) The surface covering of claim 26, wherein the average diameter of the particles forming the first layer are greater than the average diameter of the particles forming the second layer, ~~some of the particles forming the second layer interpenetrating the particles forming the first layer at the interface between the first and second layers.~~

28. (Original) The surface covering of claim 26, wherein the second particles are substantially colorless.

29. (Original) The surface covering of claim 26, wherein the second material further comprises a minority by volume of opaque particles.

30. (Original) The surface covering of claim 26, wherein the first layer further comprises a minority by volume of the second particles and the second layer further comprises a minority by volume of the first particles.